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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11500

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH
SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNMENT SUBMITS POLICY STATEMENT

SUMMARY. NEW GOVERNMENT SUBMITS POLICY STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT, WITH DEBATE EXPECTED TO BEGIN APRIL 30. THE POLICY STATEMENT IS BASED UPON THE DEMOCRAT PARTY PLATFORM, AND CENTEES AROULD LAND REFORM AND SOCIAL WELFARE. CONSERVATIVES IN THE COALITION WATERED DOWN SOME PARTS OF THE STATEMENT, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SOME COALITION MEMBERS MAY OBSTRUCT IMPLEMENTATION OF SOME PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS SUBMITTED ITS POLICY STATEMENT TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FOR STUDY IN CONNECTION WITH DEBATE AND A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. PARLIAMENT IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN DISCUSSION OF THE STATEMENT ON FRIDAY, APRIL 30, AND THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE COULD TAKE PLACE LATER THE SAME DAY. THE EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED THE THAI VERSION OF THE POLICY STATEMENT, AND WILL TRANSMIT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXT WHEN THAT BECOMES AVAILABLE. A FAIRLY ACCURATE TRANSLATION WAS PUBLISHED
IN
THE APRIL 26 ISSUE OF THE NEWSPAPER NATION.

2. THE POLICY STATEMENT IS BASED ESSENTIALLY ON THE DEMOCRAT PARTY PLATFORM. CERTAIN POINTS HAVE BEEN
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RESTATED, REPORTEDLY TO APPEASE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF

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THE COALITION, PARTICULARLY MEMBERS OF THE THAI NATION PARTY (TNP). THE TNP REPORTEDLY PLAYED AN OBSTRUCTIONIST ROLE IN THE CABINET DEBATE OVER THE STATEMENT, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING LAND REFORM AND LABOR.

3. THE POLICY STATEMENT IS IN TWO PARTS, ONE CONCERNING IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACING THE GIVERNMENT, AND ANOTHER, MORE GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT COVERING LONG TERM GOALS. THE SECTION CONCERNING IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS STRESSES PROGRAMS AIMED AT THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE IN RURAL AREAS. IT CENTERS ON LAND REFORM AND IMPROVEMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. IT ALSO PROMISES TO CONTROL INFLATION, MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER, AND SUPPRESS CORRUPT PRACTICES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

4. THE GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT IS FAIRLY PREDICTABLE, AND RARELY SPECIFIC. IT PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR THE MONARCHY AND CONSTITUTION, FOR STRENGTHENING MILITARY DEFENSE, AND FOR AN IDENPNDENT FOREIGN POLICY. ONE INTERESTING POINT IS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT STATES SPECIFICALLY, "WE WILL NOT (REPEAT NOT) ALLOW ANY FOREIGN FORCES OR BASES IN THAILAND". THE STATEMENT GOES ON TO PLEDGE IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THAILAND'S COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS, AND COOPERATION WITH THIRD WORLD NATIONS. THE NEW GOVERNMENT'SECOMOMIC POLICY STRESSES "NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND POOR" (EVERY THAI POLICITIAN'S FAVORITE PHRASE), IMPROVING TAXATION, PROMOTING TRADE, INCREASING INVESTMENT, AND JUST ABOUT EVERY OTHER GOOD THING THAT AN ECONOMIC POLICY STATEMENT COULD POSSIBLY PROMISE. THE TNP REPORTEDLY TRIED UNSUCCESS-FULLY TO ELIMINATE A SECTION PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR ORGA-NIZED LABOR AND PROMISING TO UPGRADE THE LABOR DEPARTMENT INTO A BUREAU, A HIGHER LEVEL IN THE THAI STRUCTURE (THE TNP IS PRIMARILY A PARTY OF BUSINESSMENT WHO ARE SUSPICIOUS OF AND EVEN HOSTILE TO ORGANIZED LABOR).

5. THE POLICY STATEMENT ALSO PROMISES TO REFORM EDUCA-TION, PARTICULARLY AT THE LOWER LEVELS. IT PROMISES TO IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICES, TO INCREASE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN POORER AREAS, AND TO CREATE SOME SORT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SOCIAL SECURITY WELFARE SYSTEM FOR WORKERS. OTHER SECTIONS PROMISE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN, A LOWERING OF THE BIRTH RATE, AND BUREAUCRATIC REFORM.
6. THE GOVERNMENT'S STATED POLICY IS OBVIOUSLY NOT AS IMPORTANT AS ITS ABILITY TO CARRY OUT THAT POLICY AND THIS WILL NOT BECOME CLEAR FOR SOME TIME. THERE ARE ALREADY INDICATIONS, THAT ALL MAY NOT GO SMOOTHLY. REPORTS PRESENTLY CIRCULATING OF TNP OBSTRUCTIONISM, WHILE PRE-

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DICTABLE, ARE INDICATIVE OF SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE. TNP LEADER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN, WHO IS ALSO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, IS IN A POSITION TO MAKE A SHAMBLES OF THE DEMOCRATS' LAND REFORM PROGRAM. HE HAS ALREADY CAUSED THE GOVERNMENT PROBLEMS WITH THE MILITARY BY HIS RECENT TRANSFERS OF SENIOR ARMY PERSONNEL (PRAMAN WAS MINISTER OF DEFENSE UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, AND THE TRANSFERS WERE AMONG HIS LAST ACTIONS IN THAT CAPACITY. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS SIMPLY THE IMMENSITY OF THE TASKS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET OUT FOR ITSELF. EVEN A STRONG, WELL-DISCIPLINED, SINGLE PARTY GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY WITH THEM, AND PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOT'S FOUR PARTY COALITION IS NEITHER STRONG NOR WELL DISCIPLINED.
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